

PERSPECTIVE

New media, new connections: Building Reddit's MuseumPros

Blaire Moskowitz¹ | Scott Chamness²

¹School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK

²Curator, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Austin, Texas, USA

Correspondence

Blaire Moskowitz, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK.

Email: blairemoskowitz@gmail.com

Abstract

Museum workers have been conducting informal professional discourse on the Web for decades. Today, Reddit's "MuseumPros" is one such place where twenty-eight thousand individuals discuss the lived experiences of museum workers and develop collective actions, compare experiences in the sector, and strengthen professional networks by voicing their opinions, asking questions, seeking guidance, and sharing skills. As creators and moderators of MuseumPros, we have led this community from its inception by participating, mediating, and creating resources for the community. Broadly, this paper is an auto-ethnographic review which enables us to reflect upon this community and the values we instilled and to understand its uniqueness through its anonymity, diversity of voices, and methods of knowledge construction.

KEYWORDS

MuseumPros, online community, professional discourse, Reddit

INTRODUCTION

While museums predominantly use the internet as a place to host their websites and capture the interests of in-person and digital visitors, the internet has an "underground" secondary use for museum professionals: to connect with each other through online professional communities.

The importance of these communities—with merit relying on the quality of content post—is what drew us to this digital medium and led us to create a community of our own 11 years ago on the social news website Reddit. We created MuseumPros early in our careers because we saw an opportunity to start a new and different community, were willing to experiment with the meaning of museum-online-community, and desired to be more flexible than communities in which we had previously taken part. Our mission to create an open platform (discussed more below) has been an asset as our participant numbers multiplied and their needs evolved over time.

MuseumPros is one of thousands of communities on Reddit, where users post media of their choice, including links, articles, text, and images. The content is ranked by other “redditors” (the name bestowed upon the website’s users) using an embedded voting system and users can verbalize their opinions in extensive comment sections. Therefore, the content that is voted upon is vetted by other members of each community, which acts as a quality control and makes users trust the “upvoted” content. These voting and comment sections give the website a grassroots and community-based feeling, even though the platform’s majority shareholder is Advance Publications, the parent company of Conde Nast (Advance, 2020). Each “subreddit” community centers around a specific niche topic, from blacksmithing to writing prompts, from data visualizations to recipes; if one can think of an interesting topic, a correlating Reddit subforum probably exists. Each of these subreddits acts as its own hub with its own norms and rules, which can be initially overwhelming and challenging to navigate. Yet, with rules posted and effective moderation teams, users typically find ways to relate to their fellow subscribers and join in the conversation (or, they can decide to read only or unsubscribe at will). Those who participate in voting (or, opting not to vote) and engage in conversation partake in the social structure of Reddit, contributing to the content and reciprocating with their own version of feedback. The distinct, text-heavy aesthetic of the website harkens back to older web design styles, but it is navigating and overcoming the visual challenges of this user interface (as opposed to easy-to-navigate social networks) that also make “redditors” feel as though they are part of a distinct community. With an estimated 52 million daily active users and as the ninth most visited website in the world, Reddit is very popular, even though social networking sites are often perceived as more important (Kastrenakes, 2020; Semrush, 2022).

One reason that online communities, in general, continue to thrive is that access to the internet has become significantly easier and costs less over time. Having computers in the home and now an internet-accessible phone in one’s pocket has even shifted the boundaries between intimacy and solitude, as people can congregate asynchronously online at any time and in any (physical) place.

There have been a handful of museum-themed online communities that have existed since the internet and Web became accessible to the public and have been part of museum professionals’ lives for three decades. In the early 1990s, a few Bulletin Board Systems and Web portals were used to share or trade information as part of museological professional development. As noted in the journal *Archives and Museum Informatics*, a message board system linking museums in Canada was “Narrowing the barriers of distance and isolation between museums in a large province” and:

will continue to change the way curators, collections managers, and researchers do their jobs. It will create (if properly encouraged) an electronic community of people with common interests and goals, by facilitating data gathering and exchange, collaborative research and writing, and the dissemination of new information arising from this symbiotic relationship.

(Gerrard & Leonard, 1992)

In the mid-1990s, listservs were introduced to the museum professional community and became a popular place for people to post and respond to questions. The topics of these conversations were those which remain of interest to museum professionals today: announcements of exhibits, conferences, employment opportunities, and databases; exhibit labeling; user fees and funding; access issues; new publications; software implementation; collections and curatorship; cultural attitudes and representation in exhibitions (Bearman). Shortly thereafter, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) adopted Resolution Number Five regarding the emerging use of the internet, which resulted in an increased interest among museum professionals in the “practical implication of web forums in order to

reinforce solidarity between the worldwide museum community” (Bernier & Bowen, 2005). But by 1999, museums shifted their focus away from digital staff connectivity and on to publicly facing websites (Bearman).

This is not to say that the people working at the museums had entirely shifted away from listservs in the late 1990s. Museum workers continued to congregate on Museum-L (for museums in general) as well as the listservs divided by museological department. (H-Museum for museum studies, museum-ed for education, archives-L for archives, etc.). Listservs have also been historically a place to gauge the feelings of the museological community; one study in particular focusing on MCN-L, which catered to technologically and digitally focused museologists (as well as digital interpretation and education in its more recent years). The peak of popularity for this listserv was in 2009 (100 emails per month) and remained active afterward, until many of the participants migrated to social media platforms (discussed more below). The research on this community asserts that the participants had two main types of posts—questions and announcements—and those posting wanted to connect with experts who had personal experience each topic (Marty & Alemanne, 2013). Thus, value came from answers provided by people using their professional name and institutional or organizational affiliation.

Ten years after the introduction of listservs, with the prevalence of Web 2.0 and the emergence of social media and publishing platforms, museum professional communities were reimagined and shifted to be in these emerging spaces. In the recent and current social media era, some communities have become large enough to sustain conversation (see other articles in this issue). While we at MuseumPros do not perceive these communities to be at odds with our own, we feel it important to recognize and outline some distinctions in two of the larger communities with whom we believe our interests and participants may overlap.

First, National Emerging Museum Professionals (NEMP) is an independent organization, formed initially as an offshoot of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM); while the group targets emerging professionals, it remains popular even with those who have “aged out” of the targeted group. Because the organization's conversations are hosted on Facebook, one needs an account to read or participate in the conversations. Second, the American Alliance of Museums ostensibly has the largest online community for museum professionals, Museum Junction, which automatically makes all paid organization members into forum members. Having participation linked to membership means that individuals are identified by their professional, physical-world names, and profiles. Both communities were founded first as professional organizations (NEMP and AAM) and the forum aspect developed secondarily as a means of having a place to communicate. This is different than MuseumPros, which was founded as an online community and is open for anyone to read and for anyone with a Reddit account to post.

Online museum communities have evolved to reflect worker needs over time and over the course of the last few years (coinciding with COVID and troubles across the cultural sector), several groups were established to support museum worker professional development. Two of these larger organizations are (1) [MuseumExpert.org](https://www.museumexpert.org) which highlights employment matching through a resume listing services and professional development webinars and is crowdfunded and (2) Polaris: The Museum Mentor Network, an online platform which focuses on developing one-on-one relationships and is no cost to users via an IMLS grant. Neither organization has primarily focused on informal, anonymous conversations about museology on an open platform (which have been a primary focus of MuseumPros).

It is possible—and probable—that those participating in these online spaces are also participating and reading MuseumPros. Sometimes, we even see the same posts in multiple places. We speculate that the posters are hoping to crowdsource more widely, to get answers more speedily, or to reach different museum subcultures (the younger EMPs, the more experienced mentors, various geographies, etc.). We have opted not to ask people where else they post as we feel that knowing this information could be identifying (see the section on identity below).

And, this “cross-posting” is entirely fine with us, as long as MuseumPros stays active and robust.

To first understand how MuseumPros came to be, it is worth explaining where we were in our careers a decade ago. Having then just completed a master's degree (Moskowitz) and a bachelor's degree (Chamness), we were early career professionals searching for a way to connect with other like-minded professionals. At conferences and meetings, our age and our (then) limited professional experience had overshadowed the content of our contributions in conversations.

We had each discovered Reddit separately and had found our way onto subreddits that matched our interests—our second self, digital personas (explained in more detail later)—from cultural communities to history communities. As we explored and participated in these communities, we encountered museum staff (perhaps the same people we had met at conferences and work) via their comments about their professional roles on city-specific subreddits, history subreddits, science subreddits, and more. They would answer community questions with links to their collections and clarify information about programs and hours for visitors. Yet, there was no dedicated place for these redditors to come together and discuss their careers with like-minded people. So, the logical thing to do was to make a community ourselves and to take advantage of the affordances of the digital world and the infrastructure of Reddit. We could be the museology leaders (our desired second-self personas), redditors could have a place to discuss their museum careers, and we could make use of the affordances that Reddit provided: community creation in which any subscribers we amassed would have the ability to judge us on the collective content and our community management skills.

Thus, in 2013, MuseumPros was created as a space for these scattered redditors to come together to call a place our own. It was also created as an experiment; while there appeared to be room for an online unaffiliated space dedicated to the lived experiences of museum workers, would people be interested? Would people join? Would conversations be sustained? Would others acknowledge our authority as the subreddit's moderators? We stand firm in saying that this was a community from its inception—it utilized a virtual place, had contribution processes via the pre-created digital infrastructure, it provided a commonality based on its theme and title. The questions then were, would our subscribers grow, and would the community become a resource for the field?

Eleven years and over twenty-eight thousand people later, we can give an emphatic yes, with data to back up this assertion. MuseumPros is now in the top four percent of communities on Reddit by number of subscribers (statistics available via Reddit's moderation subsection) and achieved an average yearly subscriber growth of 54.38% from January 2014 to March 2023 (subredditstats.com, 2023) (Figure 1). People are interested in having a safe space to share knowledge, develop collective actions, compare experiences in the sector, and strengthen professional networks the world over, regardless of one's professional level, department, or location. The subscribers have been empowered with the ability to post their thoughts, needs, and desires for a museum community. The subscribers are the proverbial “tour guides” leading the way and demonstrating, through their posts and actions, what is needed in an open-museum online community. This is part of what makes MuseumPros unique.

When MuseumPros was founded, our mission was to provide a space for informal professional discourse for those in the museum field. Today, that mission remains the same. It is a space where people can post anything related to museum careers and offer their perspectives. It is a space where people can then offer comments, from fresh ideas to tried-and-true methods. It is a space where the frustrated can safely explain their professional conundrums and the funny can post silly images. It is a place that all gallery, library, archive, and museum (“GLAM”) professionals can use as a safe, online space for their needs, and where we can structure resources that respond to these articulated needs. It is, to the best of our ability, a virtual space without professional organizations' standard barriers for entry. As you will see

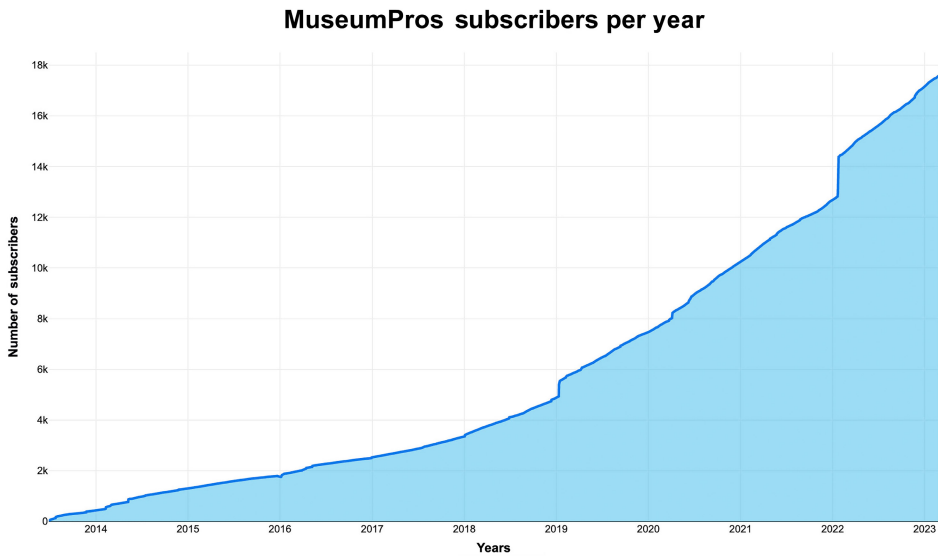


FIGURE 1 MuseumPros subscribers per year (subredditstats.com, 2023).

from our further exploration of MuseumPros that follows, we have even “doubled down” on our mission to create open dialogue and have sought to provide the space that our community needs to adequately fulfill this.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

The volume of questions and replies in subreddits means that these online communities become repositories of information. In web studies, this output of information is called the “cognitive surplus” and is formed through the time people spend online and contribute to internet resources (such as message boards and wikis) (Shirky, 2008, 2010). MuseumPros is one of these resources of cognitive surplus since the subreddit's primary use is to share museological knowledge and information surrounding the “lived experience.” In the past 5 years, we have averaged about four conversations per day, with a few comments on each post (Figure 2); cumulatively, that is a lot of information sharing (subredditstats.com, 2023).

We can divide this cognitive surplus into personal perspective and institutional practice. Personal perspective includes redditors sharing their suggestions for navigating a career, opinions about workplace policies, or an individual's thoughts on museological practice, whereas institutional practice is when a redditor shares what an institution has chosen to do, such as hiring specific vendors or enforcing policies.

An example of a post that included both personal perspective and institutional practice occurred when one redditor who self-identified as a collections manager inquired about others' experiences working on “3D scanning and photogrammetry technology for the purpose of 3D digitization” with a specific focus on smaller institutions. Within a few hours, they had received robust replies about budgeting for and purchasing scanners, brands and models, and file formats. These replies shared what their institutions had chosen to purchase while offering their thoughts on whether their museums made the right choices. The subscriber who posted the original message acknowledged each reply and followed up to explain that this information would help their institution understand the complexities of digitization. Questions that ask for specific information, like this inquiry, are common on MuseumPros and extend to all types

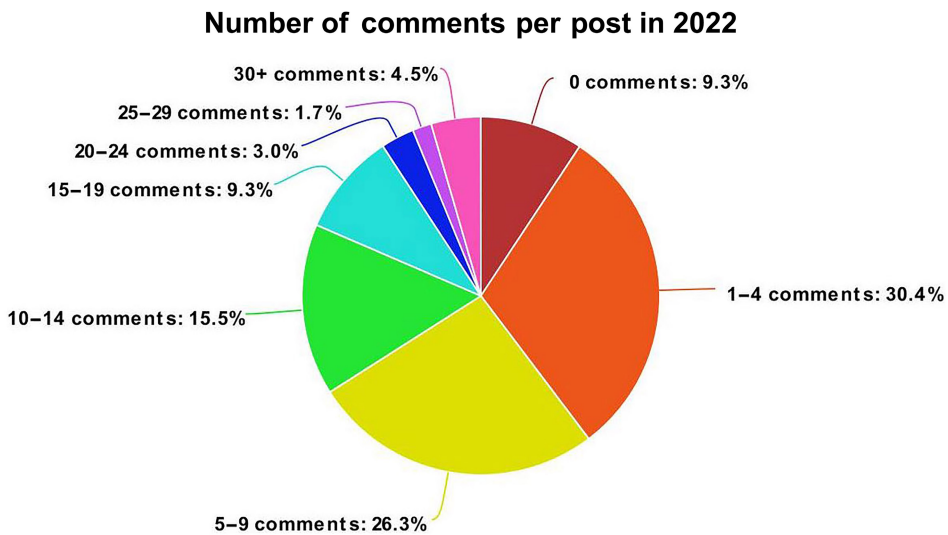


FIGURE 2 Number of comments per post in 2022 (subredditstats.com, 2023).

of behind-the-scenes software, as well as recommendations for audio tour technologies, project management software, and e-marketing services, to name a few. The resulting cognitive surplus in these situations provide the knowledge seekers with a basic understanding of their inquiry topic and a starting point for further research, in turn making museological practice more efficient.

One of our most popular subscribers in the past 10 years has been a self-described collections manager who shared storage solutions for uniquely shaped sculptures and artifacts as well as a spreadsheet with calculations and materials for constructing safe, durable custom boxes. In addition to redditors leaving replies about their admiration for the boxes' construction and peculiar shapes ("I'm giddy seeing custom boxes."), a handful of people said that as a result they were inspired to construct their own boxes as well, thus proving that the cognitive surplus of the original poster had a tangible gain for the museology sector at large by expanding a skillset to other redditors.

In some instances, we, in our roles as moderators, have broad oversight and can recognize our community's needs and thereby can also identify where expertise lies within the subreddit and museum professional community at large. This can manifest as something as simple as tagging (alerting by way of linking) another redditor as a suggestion to reply or by organizing full-fledged "Ask-Me-Anything" events. The latter is a hallmark of Reddit culture; it is an interview format in which the public can ask anything. On MuseumPros, we have recognized a series of needs over the life of our subforum: digital interpretation, inclusion, fundraising, government advocacy, and career consultation. For each of these, we have sought out expertise inside and outside of the Reddit community and organized specific days in which our subscribers can ask questions directly to panels of pre-selected experts with whom they might not typically have access. For example, when employment and job loss posts increased in alarming frequency as COVID emerged and jobs became more precarious, we recognized that MuseumPros was yet again a place for tough conversations (in part because people had lost physical "third spaces" in their museums and could not participate in in-person industry conferences) and reevaluated what our role could be during this challenging time. We decided to continue our mission to create a space for conversation and to concurrently adapt to the then-current needs of the panicked people posting. Thus, we invited an expert to share their views, while allowing our membership to remain anonymous and free to ask questions. A

museum career consultant and professor of museology¹ engaged with our community across 110 comments about career paths and applications in an Ask-Me-Anything question and answer session. We still reference this conversation when people post career-based questions, because the cognitive surplus remains valuable even as COVID stabilizes, and museum jobs are beginning to reappear. Furthermore, the uncertain state of employment at this time meant that funding was more important than ever and we began to post resources about writing to government officials. This culminated in another instance of connecting our community to external resources through American Alliance of Museum's advocacy day. We partnered with this national organization to recruit participants for their advocacy work in congress and hosted another Ask-Me-Anything session with members of the organization's advocacy and marketing teams. While attending advocacy day has financial barriers for participation and digital participation is focused on AAM's members, our session was open to our community (and anyone who wants to read the resulting cognitive surplus) and reached individuals who had questions about initiating governmental advocacy work along with those who wanted to actively participate later that month.

At other times, we have created resources that have reflected our own needs and opted to share them with MuseumPros. A national list of job boards and listing organizations was started in 2015 to assist one of the moderators' searches for museum employment and posted for the community to use in 2016. While the list initially had a United States and American English focus, the list has been regularly updated and expanded to include international and multilingual resources. At present, the list has 139 United States and 69 international resources and has been used by our community members, shared by university museum studies departments, and used by career coaches in their businesses. This list is always available on the wiki portion of our subreddit and is highlighted annually on our "front page" as a "sticky" post. In these events and resources, we bring the cognitive surplus of the museology sector to our global subscribers. We hope it is evident that while our mission to connect museologists stays the same, our means and motivations have evolved over time to meet the needs of our community.

From speaking with community participants, we believe our subscribers are primarily motivated to share information and knowledge and help us build museological cognitive surplus because they are committed to the collective welfare of the museum community (and MuseumPros in particular) and have feelings of altruism. There is an element of reciprocity as well (as is common in online communities) that information shared creates feelings of trust which begat more information shared; knowledge shared becomes knowledge read, which increases the reader's desire to share and contribute, and creates a sense of group participation or citizenship. One of our more notable and consequential inquiries and requests for knowledge was from an individual whose neighborhood was tear gassed by police and, as a result, their book collection was affected. A lengthy reply was posted shortly thereafter from a redditor with knowledge of conservation efforts used during Hong Kong police protests and detailed types of tear gas and how to safely treat the contaminated items. This emotionally heavy conversation linked necessary detailed information from one side of the world to the other and directly helped the individual who had found themselves in a traumatic situation. Furthermore, this post demonstrated the willingness for an individual to "open up" and share a difficult situation and put trust in the community to be considerate, responsive, and informative. Time and time again, the conversation threads and cognitive surplus speak to our community's ability to fill a void in museum knowledge and culture, and to do this at speed (Figure 3).

MuseumPros is able to have these robust conversations because of the "museum diversity" of our subscriber base. Anecdotally, we know that the subscribers are from a range of museums and at different levels; some self-identify as director and executive level while others share that they are front-of-house or aspiring museum professionals. This means that the cognitive surplus shared on MuseumPros is spread across museum's hierarchical levels. We also know,

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(from a subreddit-wide annual holiday gift exchange) that our subscribers are from geographically diverse locations. While the majority appear to be working in the United States, many are working in the European heritage sector, while some are working in South America and Asia (and we are eager to expand our reach to worldwide). Thus, a lack of geographic bounds has enabled us to link information across institutions and across professional organizations. With this variety of subscribers, as well as an array of personal and institutional perspectives, MuseumPros can feel like a hodgepodge. We view this as a good thing; reading about the thoughts and concerns of other museum professionals at institutions different than our own makes everyone more knowledgeable about the inner workings of museum work, even when it is not directly related to our own job responsibilities.

On MuseumPros, we can mostly rely on professional norms because our subscribers are a fairly homogenous group of people working in the sector who understand the field's typical professional demeanor. Regardless, we make use of a feature in Reddit's page design to include rules for the community to follow. The rules we devised ensure that conversations stay on-topic and enable us to reroute posts such as off-topic inquiries, vendor advertising, donation solicitations, and unethical surveys. In the rare instances that these codified rules are insufficient, we follow a soft-enforcement moderation style and intervene with rule reminders. In very rare circumstances, we send a private message that invokes the industry's social norms:

Just a reminder [that we] expect our subscribers to treat their colleagues in the museum field with respect in comment thread conversations. Disagreeing with someone's comment is fine, we want a great debate and would love to have your view. Basically, if you wouldn't say it at a professional conference, please don't say it here.

ANONYMITY AND IDENTITY

One of the affordances of the Web is being in charge of one's own identity and the ability to craft one's own digital counterpart to desired projections. Individuals may opt to keep things the same, or alter identifiers such as physical appearance, gender roles, race, age, economic, or social status. One can also adapt their digital counterpart to reflect or reveal personal interests which they opt to keep quiet in the physical world or adapt physical world interests to reflect spaces online. In the field of web studies, these digital identities are known as the “second self” (Turkle, 2012) and are quite popular on Reddit, where individuals can explore topics and subscribe to subreddits in nearly any topic imaginable. And in MuseumPros, these digital identities can reveal interests and professional aspirations or omit details that the individual may not want to share publicly. Shaping one's identity or being anonymous is an affordance of freedom.

Those subscribing to MuseumPros are self-identifying as museum professionals. As part of this self-identification, we enabled a Reddit identification feature called “flair” which provides small tags adjacent to a username. In MuseumPros, we provide the option to identify by museum type (art, children's, history, and science) and department (administration, archives, collections, curatorial, education, events, exhibits, outreach and development, technology, and visitor services) or by affiliated group (archivist, consultant, preparer, and student). While our primary reason for opening this self-identification option was because it was an available customization, the contextual tags have enabled users to gain credibility and authority by affiliation. It also provides individuality in the otherwise anonymous (and sometimes impersonal) website. Another way for users to self-identify is through acts of self-disclosure within their posts and comments. For example, when discussing graduate programs, our subscribers may choose to disclose that they are a graduate of a specific university, or when discussing their job responsibilities, they may choose to disclose their location and job title to provide context and validity. The amount of personal information shared is entirely up to the individual.

Unlike social media platforms that encourage using real names, anonymity is a major feature of Reddit. People use and refer to each other by self-chosen usernames instead of their legal names and individuals' profiles are not publicly linked to personally identifying information (unless the user chooses to do so). As a result, individuals are less likely to be sharing information to enhance their professional reputation and are more likely to reveal information that could not be shared in other circumstances.

One of the benefits of using Reddit for professionally themed conversations is that these “anonymous” users are equal in the eyes of the platform. An internal voting system enables the quality of content and knowledge to take precedence over physical world seniority and enables more opportunities for equity. In the case of MuseumPros specifically, this means that students, entry-level staff, and upper level staff have equal weight in conversations and each person can shape their own identity and present their idealized “second self” without worrying that they are too junior or too insignificant to matter to the museum industry at large.

This anonymity reveals aspects of the lived experiences of museum workers that are not discussed publicly elsewhere. Unfiltered honesty on the MuseumPros safe space discloses difficulties in employment such as tensions with coworkers (including working with inexperienced superiors and salary discrepancies), unrealistic and unfair workloads, and loneliness and safety. These posts and sentiments are very candid and quite unlike those found on other forums.

Some representative examples include the following:

I don't know how my boss got promoted [...] they're clueless about the collections.

I wish I could go back and talk myself out of my job. I thought I was lucky when I got the offer, but I accepted a low salary and now I do so much more than my job description.

I would be okay if other people were also in the building, but I am there alone. [...] [A visitor who came in] made me uncomfortable.²

There are also posts asking for advice on leaving the field and for thoughts on pursuing for-profit positions with salaries that meet living wage standards. The reply comments are often from people who have left the field for better paying positions, who explain how they portrayed their transferable skills, “My decade of experience in as an exhibition registrar proved that I could run and track projects,” shared one project manager. These individuals can remain (and are welcome) in MuseumPros because they continue to identify as members of the museum community. This is yet another side of their digital identity and “second self” in which these subscribers can pursue their interests online, even if they are no longer pursuing them in the physical world.

A notable topic on MuseumPros is the challenge of interfacing with museum boards and trustees, especially when they are engaging in unethical behavior and creating “toxic” work environments. Redditors seek advice for leaving these difficult work environments while not “leaving the collection in ruins.” One memorable post explained that board members advocated for original artworks to be destroyed once they were digitized to save space. In this case, and so many others, the anonymity provided a cover for detailed and frank discussions, away from the potentially prying eyes of supervisors and the board members themselves. The high frequency of these posts and the large quantity of replies with similar circumstances raise questions about how often museum workers are encountering these challenges; if these concerns are frequently raised here on MuseumPros due to the protection of anonymity, are established professional groups taking notice? Is there a way for us to assist in systemic change?

Job seekers (especially those at entry-level) also benefit from Reddit's anonymity. These individuals frequently ask for advice about job interviews and skills needed for specific roles which may also speak to the (un)preparedness of recent graduates and job seekers. Do these questions reveal a need for training courses about job hunting? Or for employers to offer more guidance during their recruitment phases? Should the high frequency of these posts alarm museum practitioners?

We recognize that there are risks to this anonymity. Not knowing demographic information risks a homogeneous subscriber base, for example. Or, it is possible that some advice-givers do not work in the field at all. This is not ideal, but it is a risk we are willing to take to protect the anonymity of our subscribers and to diversify the topics discussed while working toward a system that judges on the quality of contributions, as explained below.

CONCLUSION

As moderators of MuseumPros, our job is to participate in discussion, to mediate any problems that arise, and to create resources for our community. This role places us in a position of power with visual cues such as highlighted posts and our usernames listed in the moderation panel. These “credentials” likely mean that our subscribers pay more attention to our posts and put more credibility into our content. Yet our goals are not to enforce a hierarchy or commandeer conversation. If anything, we recognize that our online community sees our authority in ways that our colleagues and our bosses may not in the physical world. When we

started MuseumPros, our authority was incongruous. We were, in actuality, “emerging museum professionals” who benefited from Reddit’s anonymity. Now, after 11 years of leading this community, a cumulative 22 years of museum work experience, and a few more graduate and postgraduate degrees, we are both more knowledgeable and comfortable in our moderation roles.

We have plans for going forward: we will stick to our mission of creating a space for conversation and connections but aim to be more strategic and intentional in our plan for the community. We have discussed adding weekly features on scheduled days—such as “win of the week” or “rant of the week”—to provide structure while still allowing for freedom in posting, and endlessly discuss adding a moderator to split responsibilities while adding a new perspective. We also recognize the limitation of having MuseumPros exist on a single platform which we do not personally own; how we would handle or migrate the community is something we should consider. In addition, the textual analysis done for this paper should be replicated next year (some of the data are only available in 1-year intervals) to evaluate if and how the conversations shifted over time and to determine if this is due to changing circumstances at large, subscriber quantity, or something else. We did not set out to consider these things initially, but at this point it would be the responsible thing to do for the museology sector at large.

Yet, just as it was when we started, we have no professional organizations backing our work, no membership dues supporting our community, no funding to compensate for our time, and no infrastructure as part of a larger museum organization. Everything we do is, simply, the two of us and our twenty-eight thousand community members.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data used in this article is from [Reddit.com/r/museumpros](https://www.reddit.com/r/museumpros).

ENDNOTES

¹ Greg Stevens of Purple Cow Consulting and Seton Hall University.

² These quotes use a technique called “disguising” which switch words or phrases from actual posts to protect the writer while keeping important information and sentiments. Our community highly values the ability to post freely, and we do not feel comfortable placing subscribers’ direct quotes in a museological journal that could be read by subscribers’ colleagues.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Blaire Moskowitz earned her Ph.D. at the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies, where she researched how online expert communities align with museums' curatorial subject matter. Now, she teaches museology and art history. Her past experiences include staff and consultancy positions across art and natural history museums, sculpture parks, and botanical gardens.

Scott Chamness is a curator with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. His experience includes collections management and curatorial positions at over 10 different museums, state parks, national parks, and archives. He earned his master's degree at the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 2015.

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